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High school graduation requirements, pier safety top Sen. Kuipers' accomplishments

LANSING – Strengthening high school graduation requirements and increasing pier safety were among the highlights of Sen. Wayne Kuipers' first term in the Senate.

"In the past four years we have managed to tackle issues that are critical to Michigan's future," said Kuipers, R-Holland. "We have established high school graduation requirements that will help to ensure that all Michigan students receive a quality education."

Kuipers sponsored the legislation that will help Michigan schoolchildren be better prepared for the 21st century economy.

As chairman of the Senate Education Committee, Kuipers convened more than a dozen hearings throughout the state to hear from parents and local educators about the graduation requirements proposal. The Legislature took up the plan after the state superintendent of instruction and the State Board of Education recommended the changes.

The challenging statewide standards make Michigan a national leader in requiring students leave high school only after taking a certain amount of credits in various subjects as well as specific courses, such as algebra.

Previously, the only statewide graduation requirement seniors faced was one semester of civics.

Kuipers' legislation to increase safety near Michigan piers and beaches was also signed into law. He sponsored the measure making it a misdemeanor for anyone to tamper with or steal a marine-safety device maintained by the state or a local government. If a person dies or becomes permanently disabled because the device was unavailable or unusable, the offender could be found guilty of a felony.

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